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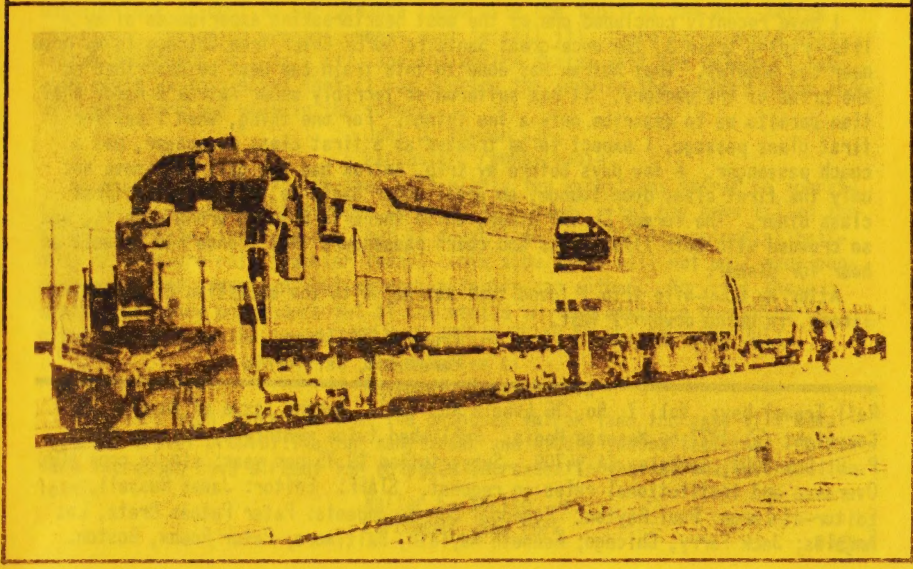
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 7 NO. 16
SECOND ISSUE OF
AUGUST 1977
#160



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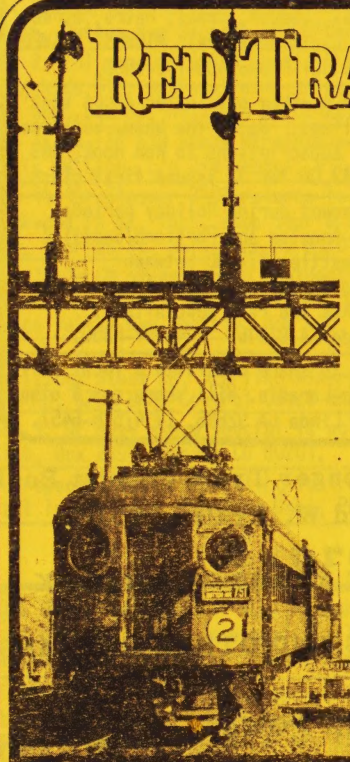

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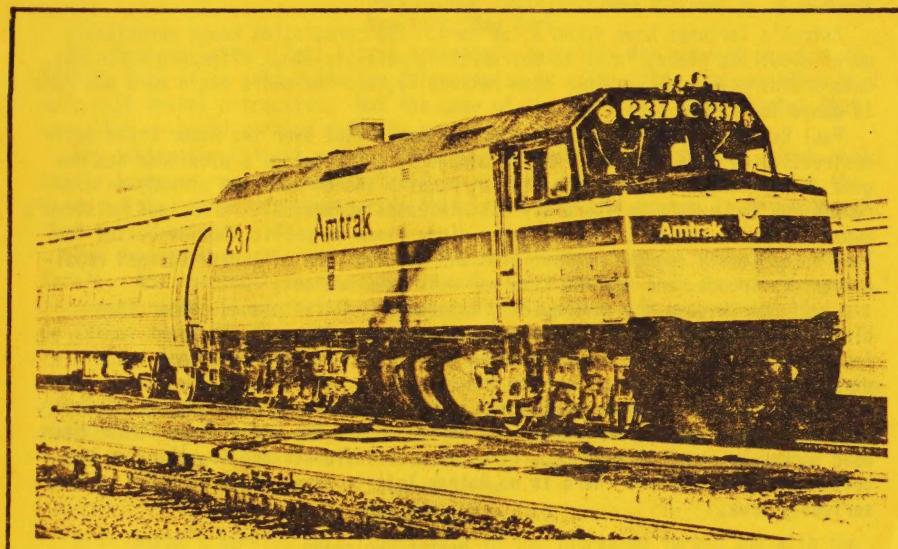

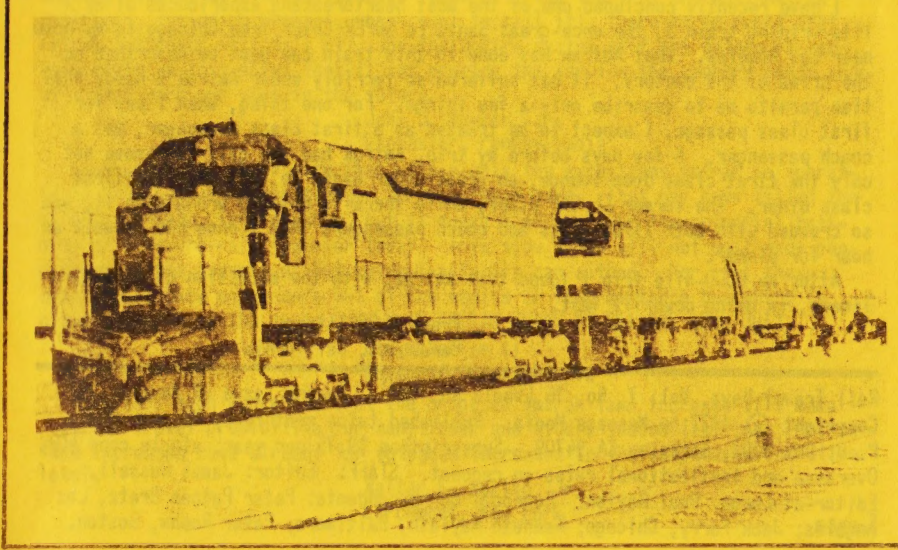

ON THE COVER

(Top:) A newly-rebuilt F40PHR locomotive, no. 237, rebuilt from SDP40F engine no. 578, seen in August on the ILLINOIS ZEPHYR at Galesburg, Illinois. Photo by Harry M. Grossman. (Bottom:) A makeup COAST STARLIGHT train at San Jose, California on Aug 30. The regular southbound train was to arrive 14 hours late at Oakland (see report last issue) and this Amfleet train was made up from the SAN JOAQUIN's equipment to run Oakland-Los Angeles--with F40 engine 227 and 5 Amfleet cars. Three SP private cars--the "Airslie," "Oakland," and "Stanford"--were placed on the rear to haul railroad bigwigs, and SP engine 8906 appeared at the front. The "Airslie" is modified for use with Amfleet cars, and all 3 cars have self-contained power. Photo by Gene Hines.

LETTERS

Amtrak's fortunes have taken a sad turn. The corporation keeps perpetually quiet about its plans, fails to say anything publicly about offending railroads, cuts trains politically rather than rationally, and the media begin more and more to dance to the Greyhound tune.

Paul Reistrup is, of course, a radical improvement over the Roger Lewis self-destruction by plan school of Amtrak managers, but Reistrup's aloofness has now gone on too long. Reistrup came to Amtrak with the corporation already in disrepute due to Lewis's deliberately disinterested management. I applaud Reistrup's general impulse not to flaunt Amtrak's dirty linen in public, but he waited too long to seriously suggest new policies and to go on the offensive against recalcitrant railroads, and now the time may well have run out.

...If Amtrak does not move quickly to assert positive plans, rather than blackmailing Congress with ridiculously-planned service cuts, the next year's Amtrak service cuts will be undoubtedly fatal to the entire long-haul route structure.

I have written at least ten letters in the last week on this subject. Other rail supporters must do the same. The hoped-for new era under Jimmy Carter has been marked by absolute silence. If we mean to influence public policy we had better do so now, before there is no Amtrak left to save. Nothing could be more seriously true.

Carl H. Fowler
Denver, Colorado

I have recently concluded one of the most heartbreaking experiences of my life--riding train 3, the once-great Santa Fe SUPER CHIEF from Chicago to my home near Los Angeles. What Amtrak has done to this train can best be described as the crime of the century. It has suffered so terribly under Amtrak's hands that time permits me to describe only a few things. For one thing, when I pay for first class passage, I expect to be treated as a first class passenger, not a coach passenger. A few days before my trip, Amtrak had the gall to remove not only the first class dome lounge, so great under Santa Fe, but also the first class diner. The former EL CAP diner, while there is nothing wrong with it, was so crowded with both first class and coach passengers that I once had to wait an hour for dinner.

After my 6000-mile trip I found that Amtrak, with the exception of the Metroliners, is going downhill fast.

Frank G. Williams
Paramount, California

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Recent criticisms of Amtrak do not mention the most disastroub aspect of Amtrak service--disastrous, at least, from the viewpoint of one who rides chiefly in the Northeast: hopeless timekeeping.

I ride fairly extensively, having given Amtrak some $450 worth of business so far this year (all east of Chicago and north of Washington, much in the N.E. Corridor). I have never yet been on a train which was on time or which was less than 20 minutes late. As a result, I can't recommend Amtrak service to others. The last time I made such a recommendation (for a Chicago-Detroit ride) I received bitter complaints about a trip which ended over one hour late.

This year I have found on-board services to be much better, but timekeeping at its absolute worst. To keep passengers, Amtrak will have to absord a hitherto unlearned lesson: passengers aren't freight--time matters to them.

Christopher Wasiutynski
New York, New York

Mr. Bretz's letter (last issue) accurately describes the current problem of Amtrak: that it is self-defeating to economize by eliminating the amenities that make rail travel attractive. But the case of the MONTREALER demonstrates that so-called on-board service deficits are higher than they need be.

The dining car deficit on the MONTREALER is said to be high, but Amtrak could easily increase revenues substantially merely by informing passengers that the diner exists. When passengers ride this train they are exposed to no evidence that full meals are available.

The superb diner and lounge on the MONTREALER will soon be replaced by the Amcafe. The introduction of new equipment will undoubtedly be termed "progress." It seems bizarre to me that the replacement of a diner with a snack counter can be called progress. One thing is certain--passengers are tired of long waits in crowded coaches filled with cigarette smoke, merely to purchase, at best, a mediocre microwave meal. We are fed up with having to stumble over people while returning to our seats, spilling our drinks in the process. To many of us, the MONTREALER provided the only high-quality on-board service left in the Corridor, and we are angry to see it die without having been given a fair chance.

Stephen Linde
New York, New York

With Amtrak's service cuts, together with the increased fares, and with the ongoing lack of on-time performance (generally the fault of the anti-Amtrak railroads, including Conrail, which want to kill it), there is no doubt that Amtrak patronage will fall off, and the entire system will die before it has been built up to a point that it can provide the service the country needs and will need more and more in the future.

John J. Bowman, Jr.
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

I am under the impression that with mighty few exceptions Amtrak is operating a 45 mile per hour passenger service these days. That may have filled the bill in Abraham Lincoln's day, but it doesn't do much for the potential business or pleasure rail traveler today. This slow speed will not pull many people out of the convenient but expensive family car either. Nor will these speeds pull many passengers out of the medium or long distance bus which is often faster than the train. WHEN IS AMTRAK GOING TO GET THE LEAD OUT?

Elwyn Seelye II
Rosemont, Pennsylvania

I am very much concerned that the proposed Amtrak fare increase will make railroad travel prohibitive for many lower and middle income families. Amtrak fare increases have already far outpaced increases in the nationwide inflation level.

Walter E. Zullig, Jr.
Larchmont, New York

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR CANCELLATIONS

Effective Oct. 30

TRAIN NUMBER	ORIGIN & DEPARTURE TIME	DESTINATION	DAYS NOW OPERATED	DAYS CANCELLED
Metroliners				
104	Washington, 8:00 a.m.	New York	Daily	Sunday
106	Washington, 9:00 a.m.	New York	Daily	Sunday
110	Washington, 11:00 a.m.	New York	Mon. thru Sat.	Saturday
114	Washington, 1:00 p.m.	New York	Daily	Saturday
132	New York, 8:17 p.m.	New Haven	Sun. thru Fri.	All Days
131	New Haven, 7:50 a.m.	New York	Mon. thru Sat.	All Days
105	New York, 8:30 a.m.	Washington	Daily	Sunday
107	New York, 9:30 a.m.	Washington	Sunday Only	Sunday
109	New York, 10:30 a.m.	Washington	Daily	Saturday
113	New York, 12:30 p.m.	Washington	Daily	Saturday
New York-Philadelphia				
237	New York, 6:35 a.m.	Philadelphia	Mon. thru Fri.	Mon. thru Fri.
213	New York, 2:00 p.m.	Philadelphia	Daily	All Days
227	New York, 7:05 p.m.	Philadelphia	Daily	All Days
250	Philadelphia, 5:45 a.m.	New York	Mon. thru Sat.	All Days
168	Philadelphia, 7:15 a.m.	New York	Daily	All Days
204	Philadelphia, 9:00 a.m.	New York	Daily	All Days
220	Philadelphia, 5:00 p.m.	New York	Sun. thru Fri.	All Days
222	Philadelphia, 6:00 p.m.	New York	Sun. thru Fri.	All Days
New York-Harrisburg				
42	Harrisburg, 6:20 a.m.	New York	Mon. thru Fri.	All Days
43	New York, 5:06 p.m.	Harrisburg	Mon. thru Fri.	All Days
New Haven-Springfield				
402	New Haven, 9:00 a.m.	Springfield	Daily	All Days
404	New Haven, 11:00 a.m.	Springfield	Daily	Mon.-Fri.
406	New Haven, 1:00 p.m.	Springfield	Daily	Sat.-Sun.
408	New Haven, 3:00 p.m.	Springfield	Daily	Mon. thru Fri.
401	Springfield, 9:05 a.m.	New Haven	Mon. thru Sat.	All Days
405	Springfield, 1:10 p.m.	New Haven	Daily	Mon. thru Fri.
409	Springfield, 3:00 p.m.	New Haven	Daily	All Days
415	Springfield, 7:10 p.m.	New Haven	Sun. Only	Sun. Only
Harrisburg-Philadelphia				
605	Philadelphia, 8:00 a.m.	Harrisburg	Daily	Sunday
620	Harrisburg, 9:00 p.m.	Philadelphia	Daily	Saturday
Boston-New York				
153	Boston, 6:00 a.m.	New York	Daily	All Days
185	Boston, 5:00 p.m.	New York	Fri. & Sun.	Fri. & Sun.
187	Boston, 7:00 p.m.	New York	Daily	All Days
180	New York, 7:10 a.m.	Boston	Daily	All Days
150	New York, 4:10 p.m.	Boston	Daily	All Days
162	New York, 8:05 p.m.	Boston	Fri. & Sun.	Fri. & Sun.
Providence-New Haven				
151	Providence, 5:42 a.m.	New Haven	Mon. thru Fri.	All Days
152	New Haven, 3:35 p.m.	Providence	Mon. thru Fri.	All Days
Washington-New York				
166	Washington, 8:05 p.m.	New York	Fri. & Sun.	Fri. & Sun.

Items to note:

There are some instances where only a portion of a train will cease operating. For example, Metroliner #131 will not run between New Haven and New York, but will continue to operate between New York and Washington.

On the Springfield-New Haven route, the remaining services will be repatterned. New schedules will be announced later.

NARP SUPPORTS AMTRAK SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS

(The following is the text of a press release from the National Association of Railroad Passengers, dated Sept 2:)

Executives of NARP met this morning with Amtrak President Paul Reistrup to discuss Amtrak's funding problems and service cutbacks.

NARP President Orren Beaty urged Reistrup to clearly state Amtrak's needs for a supplemental appropriation, and offered the full support of NARP in such an effort. Beaty reminded Reistrup that the Administration's position, as stated last March in Congressional testimony, will not permit any increase in Amtrak funding over the next four years to allow for inflation. Thus, Administration policy appears to call for annual cutbacks in Amtrak service.

Reistrup stated that he cannot call for a supplemental appropriation without the support of the Amtrak Board of Directors, and noted that both the Board Chairman, Donald Jacobs, and the chairman of the Board's Finance Committee, Robert Dunlop, oppose a supplemental appropriation.

Reistrup agreed, said Beaty, that the combined effects of inflation and a constant-level operating subsidy could eventually destroy Amtrak if the operating subsidy is held at a constant $500 million. At the same time, he emphasized that operating subsidies would eventually decline if Amtrak were granted enough capital funds to rebuild existing out-of-date rolling stock and purchase more new rolling stock. The Administration cut Amtrak's capital request even more severely than its operating request, and opposed acquisition of further new passenger cars.

NARP will continue to urge the Amtrak Board, the Congress, and the Administration to give Amtrak adequate funds to do the job for which it was created--running a nationwide rail passenger system. Beaty noted that the demand for good rail passenger service has been clearly established. Amtrak ridership nationwide has risen from 16.6 million to 18.6 million annually, and on individual routes where new equipment has been added percentage increases have been much higher.

AMTRAK SEEKS SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS

Amtrak's Board of Directors met in a special session Sept 19 and, in response to "widespread public reaction", voted to ask Congress for a supplemental appropriation of $56.5 million "to prevent reductions in trains or services during the year which begins Oct 1." This amount would raise Amtrak's total operating appropriation for FY 1978 to $545 million, the full amount approved by Congress in earlier authorizing legislation (altho the amount actually appropriated by Congress was $488.5).

Last December Amtrak had decided that $543.1 million would meet its operating needs in FY 78 (this was cut to $500 million by the White House), but the Board was told at its special meeting that unexpcted inflationary increases of $11 million made the earlier amount less than would be needed.

The supplemental appropriation is for operating expenses only. The Board deferred until its regular Sept 28 meeting a decision on whether to ask Congress to increase its capital expenditure appropriations also. The Board voted 7-1 to request the additional $56.5 million, with the DOT representative being the only dissenting voter.

In a letter to Congressional leaders dated Sept 20, Amtrak President Paul Reistrup broke down the $56.5 million as follows: $10.6 million for unexpected inflation; $20 million to avoid major route cutbacks; $7.1 to avoid further train frequency reductions; and $18.8 million to partially restore current train frequency reductions already announced. He said that Amtrak's need was urgent and asked Congress to work on the request promptly.

Reistrup in his letter gave the following priorities of service restorations (from highest to lowest): (1) Metroliners; (2) Philadelphia-Harrisburg service; (3) N.E. Corridor 100-series trains; (4) The PALMETTO; (5) New Haven-Springfield trains; (6) N.E. Corridor costs associated with the above; (7) Chicago-Milwaukee service; (8) Some 200-series Philadelphia-NY trains; (9) the SAN JOAQUIN; (10) The INTER-AMERICAN; (11) The HILLTOPPER; (12) The SHENANDOAH; (13) The EMPIRE BUILDER (subject to bi-level availability); (14) The NORTH COAST HIAWATHA summer frequency, subject to bi-level availability; (15) The CLAMDIGGER; (16) The connection to the SOUTHERN CRESCENT; (17) The CHAMPION; (18) SILVER METEOR Orlando leg.

AMTRAK CUTS, RESTORES CORRIDOR REDCAPS

Amtrak announced this month that effective Sept 14 it would eliminate 80 redcaps in the N.E. Corridor, along with 100 other jobs, to cut costs. The ICC then got a court order to restore redcap service, and Amtrak announced on Sept 13 that Amtrak President Paul Reistrup had "intervened personally", directing that the service or "its equivalent" be available for all Corridor passengers who

need it. Corridor managers had made the earlier decision, and Reistrup's directive to them was to tell them to use other personnel for redcap services when possible, but to continue full redcap service when necessary. Amtrak said the action would be permanent regardless of the outcome of the ICC's court case. The reduction of 180 positions, including some managerial positions, was to save $3.3 million per year.

Rail Canada

THE EASTBOUND "CANADIAN" was halted by washed-out track near Marathon, Ont., on Aug 28. About 390 passengers were aboard, and they were flown to their destinations. Heavy rains washed out two sections of track.

THE UNITED STATES isn't the only place where rail passenger traffic is on the increase. 1977 figures from Canada show rail travel up about 10% over 1976. The transcontinental trains are up 7%; Toronto-Montreal runs carried 20% more passengers so far this year (an increase of about 70,000 up to August); Toronto-Ottawa is up 10%; and Toronto-Windsor-London-Sarnia is up 11%. The Maritimes saw ridership rise 6%. The month of August had a big 30% increase due to the air traffic controllers' strike.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION will continue public hearings on the Maritime services at 10am Oct 12 in Sherbrooke, Quebec. The address is L'Auberge des Gouverneurs, 3131 West King Street.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU announced his long-awaited cabinet shuffle Sept 16, and Otto Lang survived at the Transport Minister post. The leading replacement candidate, Alberta M.P. Jack Horner, was made Minister of Industry and Trade.

CITY OF MONTREAL and surrounding areas were blacked out by a huge power failure for over 2 hours Sept 20, stopping subways and creating traffic jams. The outage hit at 3:35pm.

CP RAIL HAS scheduled a Canadian Thanksgiving cruise for the "Princess Patricia" (see RTN, 1st July) on Oct 6-10. Departure will be 8:30pm from Vancouver, with calls at Victoria and Seattle. Fares are $200-340 per person, and allow a pleasant, short voyage aboard this beautiful Alaska cruise liner. Details from CP at Pier B, Vancouver B.C., V6C 2R3. CP accepts collect calls for reservations at (604) 665-2507. The ship makes its final Alaska cruise of the season Sept 28 from Vancouver.

THE DISCOVERY TRAIN, the Canadian version of the Freedom Train, will begin its Canadian tour next July 1--Canada Day.

HERE'S A SUMMARY of Canadian passenger trains discontinued this year: (1) CP RDC 427-428 Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie; (2) CN RDC 687-688 Winnipeg-North Thunder Bay, dropped Aug 1; (3) CN weekly mixed train M284-M285 Dauphin-Winnipegosis, dropped Apr 24; (4) CN tri-weekly mixed train M292-M293, Prince Albert-Hudson Bay, dropped Apr 24; (5) CN RDC 696-698-699-697, Edmonton-Grand Centre daily; (6) CN daily RDC 690-691, Edmonton-North Battleford; (7) CN daily RDC 678-679, Quebec-Clermont, dropped Apr 30. In addition, CP 167-164-172 Montreal-Mont Laurier was cut from tri-weekly to weekends only; and CN was allowed to suspend for 6 months trains 627-628-629-630-632 Richmond-Lyster-Quebec City.

THE SECOND NATIONAL Rail Passenger Conference & Public Transport Users Congress, sponsored by Transport 2000 and Algonquin College will be held Sept 30-Oct 2 at Algonquin College in Ottawa. Speakers will include President Frank Roberts of VIA Rail Canada and Ross Capon of NARP.

CP RAIL SLEEPER "Chateau Iberville" has received repairs for what looks like major damage on the left side of the car--perhaps from a boulder tumbling onto the car in the mountains. Repairs, made with stainless steel, were completed with patch marks showing and also a dent which is easily seen. Can any reader tell us what happened to this car?

VANCOUVER B.C.'S NEW cross-harbour "Sea-Bus" ferry service was suspended Sept 8 due to a labour dispute.

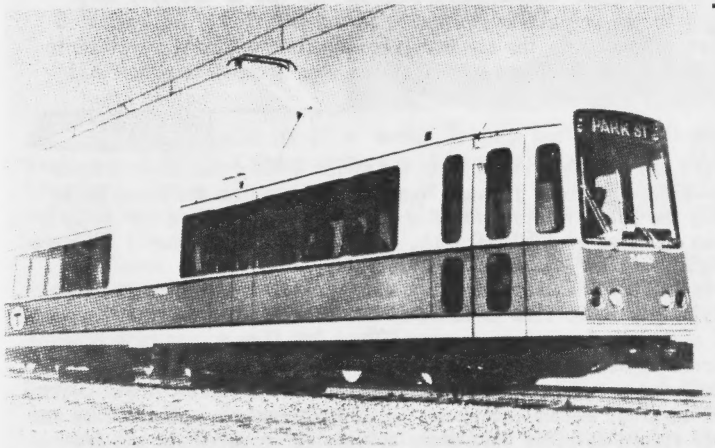
NOTES ON THE

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT CONFERENCE

Peter I. Roehm

The last four days of August saw some 500 international delegates in Boston for the National Conference on Light Rail Transit, sponsored by the Transportation Research Board, UMTA, and the American Public Transit Association. Boston, the first American city with new light rail vehicles in service, seemed an appropriate location for this extensive meeting of over 40 papers plus an LRV tour to and including the new Riverside maintenance facility.

Covered by some of the papers were such topics as: Evolution of LRT; Case Studies on Pittsburgh, Calgary, Edmonton, Buffalo and San Francisco; Evaluation of Operating Light Rail and Streetcar Lines in the U.S.; Utilization of Railroad Rights of Way for Light Rail; and Operational Idiosyncracies for a Subway-Surface System. But much interesting comment came also from unprinted speeches, hospitality rooms, between-courses chitchat, and wherever.



The Boeing-Vertol Light Rail Vehicle (LRV) in MBTA livery.

In the U.S. some 35 LRT and streetcar routes are operating on 13 systems in nine cities, covering about 200 miles and using 1035 cars. These systems range in size from Detroit and Fort Worth to Boston and Philadelphia. Some might question the Fort Worth inclusion, yet the intensity of utilization as measured by passengers per day per mile of line is excelled only by Boston's five routes and the New Orleans car line.

The Boston LRV experience has been just that--an experience! And both MBTA Chairman Robert Kiley and Director of Operations Dave Gunn so inferred in rather humored ways in respective speeches to the gathered faithful. Kiley's talk came at dinner on Monday evening, and he began with a comment on the birth, infancy and severe growing pains of the T's new baby, but also with a question of who the father really is and whether he can be identified. Not one of the 3 main principals in the LRV story--MBTA, UMTA, and Boeing--is satisfied with the operating performance of the LRV cars, and word has it that Boeing in Seattle is less than pleased with Boeing-Vertol's LRV performance and that another contract had better be landed soon or else.

Gunn, in a talk the next afternoon, hit on the point that one of the biggest problems in the entire affair was quite simply that there was never a prototype;

also, operations people were excluded from the nitty-gritty design work and left in simple advisory positions to the generally unqualified aerospace engineers. That the car was revolutionary in concept rather than evolutionary, as Canada is trying to develop it, has not helped, and it would be helpful to design the car for the system upon which it is to operate.

All of this hit home when Kiley advised that on the day of his talk only 14 of the 30 LRVs presently accepted and in service had been capable of meeting the morning rush, and fewer still--eight--were on hand for the evening rush. And this is after some 475,000 miles of testing since the end of last year.

Adding insult to injury on Tuesday, the LRVs that were to take the delegates to Riverside were delayed because the Blandford Street siding switch would not work, and the T could not get the cars to Copley for a while.

As more cars arrive, the reliability declines, Gunn said: Of the 6 cars available in January, 90% availability was the rule in the morning and 75% in the evening; in August, with 30 cars, the morning percentage was 45% and the evening was 43%.

So far, some 41 modifications have been identified for introduction into the LRV, namely: 16 to correct door design deficiencies; 4 to correct truck design (with a new bearing plate for the center truck; car can now be operated only from the B end); 7 to the propulsion system; 6 to the friction brake system; 5 to the air comfort system; 2 to the car body; and one to the auxiliary electric system. Quite clearly most of these modifications when grouped together will outweight the original cost of the car!

This LRV crisis had prompted the MBTA to establish a PCC rebuilding program and a prototype--#3072--has been in operation for a few months and doing quite well and pleasing the MBTA officials no end. Subsequently, funding for fifty rebuilds has been approved at $150,000 each. Like the LRV, the rebuilt PCC cars will have pantographs rather than trolley poles.

In the interim the MBTA has established a short term LRV goal that by late 1977 or early 1978 they would like to have, of the 43 cars then expected to be acceptable, 80% available for and in service 90% of the time during rush hours for a 30-day period without excessive maintenance requirements. Meanwhile, the San Francisco Muni has two LRVs destined its way, and the Automatic Train Control installed is not working, and Boeing is not yet able to say why. Both Kiley and Gunn have gone on record as being "guardedly optimistic" about their LRV program's success.

I stopped by the hospitality room of the Canadian Urban Transportation Development Corporation to find out what was new with them. Coming in October will be two of the six cars being built in Switzerland by SIG prior to letting the contract under license to Canada's Hawker-Siddeley. Following testing they will hopefully go to the TTC for service in October or December.

A sharp new paint scheme of red-white-black-gray adorns the cars, with the black being the window band and coordinating with the dark-tinted windows as on many intercity buses. Hawker will construct the balance of 190 cars, called the TTC car and shorter than the much-publicized UTDC car, plus two articulated sets of two cars each, which will bring the final number to 200. The TTC car is 12 feet shorter than the UTDC version, 12,000 poinds lighter, able to M-U with six rather than four cars, and of greater standee capacity, altho with fewer seats. Design life is for 25 years.

The UTDC representative mentioned that the Cleveland decision is due momentarily, and he felt that his firm was holding well in the non-conforming bid category and that Brada (Italy) was okay for the conforming bid.

A Toronto sideline is that the St. Clair carbarn will close next spring, casting speculation over the future of the entire St. Clair line in this actually not-pro-trolley operation.

Alberta's two fledgling LRT routes, Edmonton and Calgary, were the subjects of papers at the conference. Edmonton is well ahead of Calgary even in their own construction schedule, with the Edmonton system to open in February and Calgary not expected before 1982. Both use railroad rights-of-way alignments, with the length of Edmonton being half that of Calgary--4.5 miles versus 8. Both systems will use Siemens-Duwag U-2 model vehicles. Edmonton had ordered 14 of the cars but discovers it could use 20 or more. Calgary wants 27 and Duwag informed both parties that if the Calgary order could be upped to 40 (10 of which would be for Edmonton), then a 20% discount could be allowed on the balance over Calgary's original requirements. Ultimately Edmonton would have 24 cars and Calgary would use 30.

PCC streetcar of the San Francisco Muni running on Market Street during the 1969 BART subway construction. These cars still run, will be replaced by LRVs. Message Media photo.

East Haven, Connecticut, has asked Brantford Electric if they would extend their line into town and around the village green, thus upgrading the town's central business district and shopping area. Brantford likes the idea and is pursuing it jointly with the town.

Those who have traveled the St. Louis line thru Pittsburgh on the Pennsy and have wondered recently why the train no longer uses the old Panhandle bridge may be interested to know that it has been abandoned. That is not really new news, but PAT has decided that it would like to have that bridge for access to the city by its PCC and eventual LRT cars as the capacity of the present Smithfield Street Bridge is totally inadequate. If the PAT trolleys were to switch to the Panhandle routing, they would also use it into the Penn Station area, where a terminal would be constructed. Another case of former railroad right of way going light rail!

MBTA FIAT CAR left Boston Aug 30 on Amtrak train 449, the LAKE SHORE LIMITED for Chicago arriving the following afternoon. On Sept 2 at 10am an inspection run was made over the Rock Island lines that would see this car in service.

WASHINGTON'S METRO SYSTEM experienced its first crash at 11:20pm on Sept 11 when two 2-car test trains collided 200 yards north of the Rhode Island Avenue station, shaking up and slightly injuring some of the 10 workers aboard them. Reportedly one train moved at low speed thru a switch and struck the left side of an immobile train, derailing all four cars. The action occurred on the Red Line extension to Silver Spring, not yet open. Regular operations continued the next morning with a 2-minute detour movement needed on the elevated section.

BOSTON'S B&M/SOUTH will get new express and local schedules in late October, and its Franklin Branch is finally getting the full rebuilding treatment.

Transit Urban-Suburban Transit

NEW UMTA HEAD Richard Page has reiterated the Carter administration's go-slow policy on funding urban subway systems. "We have probably seen the last of the big regional subway projects. From Now on, we'll expect an exhaustive examination of every possible alternative before rail is approved, and then we'll want a justification of each segment before it is funded" he told the New York Times this month.

UMTA HAS GRANTED Chicago in late September $86.8 million to cover a number of transit projects, including engineering work for a rapid transit line extension to O'Hare airport, for buying rolling stock from the CNW, for 7 new diesels for the Milwaukee Road, and for track and station renovation on the ICG, CNW, Rock Island, Milwaukee Road, and BN.

THE BART STRIKE was settled and full service was resumed by mid-day on Sept 7. The California legislature on Sept 14 voted for a permanent sales tax to subsidize BART. The bill is expected to be signed by Gov Brown. The ½% sales tax in BART counties would have expired in June, 1978.

TRANSIT BRIEFS: The Flxible Co. bus unit of Rohr Industries will be sold to Grumman Corp. for about $40 million, the Wall Street Journal reported Sept 19... San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was almost put out of commission Sept 15 when a crane being towed struck it; a collapse of the 41-year old bridge would have made BART the only direct passenger connection between the two cities... A bus strike in Louisville KY began Sept 10... The EPA is proposing regulations to make buses quieter--printed in the Federal Register Sept 12... Boston's B&M and MBTA announced a new station at Tufts University starting Sept 1... New York State has okayed the lease of 4 D&H PA diesels to Boston's MBTA/B&M-South, and UMTA's approval is now awaited for an October startup of the proposed lease... SEPTA's LibertyLiners are not out of service, retired, or pending disposal--the two trainsets are expected to return to service after solution of some unspecified problems... The Rock Island began testing RDC cars on its Suburban Branch Sept 4...

CARS & CONSISTS

*FLORIDIAN/AUTO-TRAIN, last run, southbound Louisville Sep 3: engines Amtrak 232 (F40), A-T 4009 & 4008 (U36B's); A-T auto carriers 58, 40, 53, 56, 20, 4; A-T passenger cars 602, 604, 703, 908, 570, 591; Atk heater car 1919; Atk psgr cars 1519, 2690, 8089, 5467, 5801, 4589, 3811, SP 6719. Engine 4009 has smiling cartoon face.

*PANAMA LIMITED, train 58, lv Hammond LA Sept 8: engines 600 (SDP40F), 236 (F40 PHR, ex-551); cars 1367, 21823, 21875, 20222, 21151, 21211.

*DOT special test train, Kansas City Aug 31 ar 9:10pm from St. Louis: engine MoPac 2054; cars DOT T-1, DOT T-3. Same, Kansas City Sep 6 southbd: engine KCS 4002 (GP-38-2); cars DOT T-1, DOT T-3, KCS business car "Tolmak."

*LONE STAR, train 16, Kansas City Aug 31: engines 507, 524 (SDP's); cars 1106, 2310 "Boca Grande," 2754 "Palm Loch," 8074, dome 9355 (ex-SOUTHWEST LTD), 4864, 9929, 9944, 9910, 2750 "Palm Arch," 1097 off at K.C., 2727 "Pine Pass" deadhead.

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Galesburg IL Aug 28 (substitute equipment day after wreck of no. 5): engines 710 (P30), 424 (E9A), 368 (E8A); cars 1023, 1035, 1414, 1591, 4806 "Silver Larch", dome 9463, 4816, 4470, 3500 "Amtrak," 8075, 2632 "Pacific Shore," 2639 "Pacific Union," 2761 "Palm Tower."

*Amtrak inspection train New Haven-Springfield-New Haven Sep 13: engine 211 (F40); Amcoach 21811, track inspection car 10,000. Connecticut PUC tour.

*BROADWAY LIMITED, train 41, Harrisburg Aug 14: engine 4935 (GG-1, to Harrisburg); 427, 470, 473, 430 (Harrisburg-Chicago); cars 1029, 1190, 1063, 5461, 5804, 2005, 2026, 5443, 5403, 5464, 5262, 3405, 8800, 8801, 3209 "Rippling Creek," 2401 "Bad Axe River," 2550 "Air Force Academy," 2556 "The Potomac."

*PIONEER, train 25, Salt Lake Sep 8: engine 226; cars 21110, 20220, 21859.

A WINNING TRAIN
THE RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR

by Carl H. Fowler

The D&RGW is an odd candidate to win RTN's regular ratings survey on the best-run passenger trains. In the late 1960's and early 70's the D&RGW regularly ran the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR terribly late, systematically eliminated passenger trains all over its system, and repeatedly stated in no uncertain terms that it had no vision of any future for the passenger train.

Rio Grande was strongly criticized for failing to join Amtrak. And NARP was furious with the railroad's decision to eliminate direct rail service between Salt Lake City and Ogden, but at least this observer cannot be so disturbed. The survival of trains 17 and 18 would be jeopardized indeed if the D&RGW were still paying the huge terminal charges it was slapped with to run into Ogden Union Station, not to mention the expense of a full crew required by operating rules for a less-than 40-mile Salt Lake to Ogden run. The substitute bus-limousine makes connections, when Amtrak allows them, at Ogden, and is cost-efficient for a run that is really only a depot transfer.

The Rio Grande's connections, or the lack thereof, have been an on-going problem. Clearly the Rio Grande views the train as a local service. Its tri-weekly schedule is designed to encourage 2- and 4-day weekending from Denver. Because of the many curves and steep grades on the D&RGW, it is impossible for the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR to make connections at both ends of its route with the same Amtrak train. Many railfans have complained about the lack of thru connections in Denver. However, the Rio Grande enjoys an extremely strong business from Denver to Glenwood Springs that is attracted because the train's present timings allow 26 hours at the resort. A 10:30am Denver departure would seriously reduce this business. Better such criticism should be directed at Amtrak, which has three times disrupted the connection at Ogden, most recently missing the ZEPHYR with both the eastbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the eastbound PIONEER. The D&RGW did once break this connection itself by changing its Denver departure from 7am to 7:30, but there was a simultaneous Amtrak schedule change and the real business of the ZEPHYR was improved by the change.

The Rio Grande's handling of this train has shown, on the one hand, little interest in its growth (no advertising, failure to set eastbound timings back two hours this spring to re-establish eastbound connections at Ogden--a move that might actually have further helped business out of Glenwood), but by the same token the railroad's handling of the ZEPHYR has been anything but neglectful.

The Rio Grande owns one diner, one observation dome lounge, one buffet lounge, four dome coaches, two flattop coaches, and two combines for ZEPHYR service. That is all. All other former CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR cars were either sleepers and sold, or the property of other railroads, and the Rio Grande's 60-plus year old Ski Train cars could hardly be used on the ZEPHYR. With such a small equipment pool even minor breakdowns are potentially extremely disruptive, but the cars rarely break down. Not only has the Rio Grande repeatedly rebuilt these cars since going it alone, but routine maintenance that seems to elude Amtrak does not mystify the D&RGW. Cleanliness is impeccable. A little Lexan was used for a while, but new

glass windows now glisten in the cars, especially the beautifully overhauled diner. A freshly installed car wash in Salt Lake City insures that the eastbound train is as spotless as its westbound companion (altho the Rio Grande is no more successful than Amtrak in really keeping dome windows clear).

The dining car service is remarkable. Over 20 different items from salad bowls to fresh trout are offered at dinner; quality varietal, as well as so-called Burgundy wines are available; and what other train the the U.S. today can offer such a treat as lamb shanks braised with fresh vegetables in wine at dinner? Compromises? Some silver has been sold off and replaced with stainless, and while linen table cloths, embossed "CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR", and used at all meals, paper napkins have taken over. Not much of a compromise in a diner that still offers plate as well as table d'hote dinners and is supplemented by one of the handsomest full lounge cars running anywhere, a lounge that does a very thriving business.

In late summer I took a group of nine Colorado state employees to Glenwood Springs on a genuine business trip, traveling both ways on the train. None had been on a train anywhere in at least 10 years, five never, and all are already planning repeat trips.

Obviously new passengers cannot detect the remarkably consistent on-time (at terminals) performance of this train, nor the always high quality of its food services, but that is precisely the train's strength--its consistency. Passengers should be able to get on a train and not have to wonder what things will be like. In this area the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR really excells. Things work. If an air conditioner breaks, it is fixed. The train is almost never side-tracked for a freight. This summer track work west of Grand Junction has caused consistent 25-minute delays into Glenwood eastbound, but the ZEPHYR arrives in Denver within five minutes of schedule, despite mountains and the Rio Grande's very dense freight services. A few more exhausted older crew members have retired and the force now on hand performs with quiet polish and warm effectiveness.

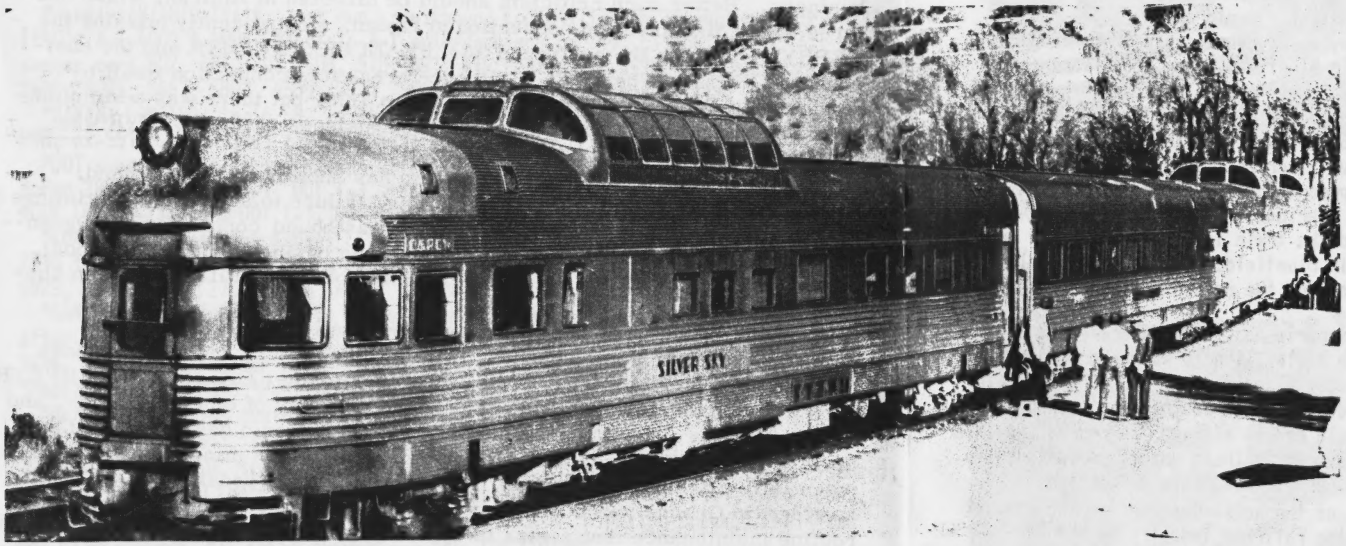
Scenery is obviously a factor over which the Rio Grande has little control. The Rio Grande scenery is consistently awesome. After 50 trips as far as Winter Park and many over the entire route, I am dazzled anew each trip. The same response affects the public. The Rio Grande does little advertising, but satisfied passengers tell their friends and the service is remarkably well-used. On Monday, Aug 15 with no tour groups of importance on the train, five coaches were filled with happy travelers repeating over and over, "I never knew trains could be so nice."

Patronage is up over pre-Amtrak days, altho the terrible snowless winter of '77 will do little for this year's overall ridership. The D&RGW has claimed deficits on this service ranging from $800,000 to $2 million per year. I doubt the higher figure, as a company as well-managed as the Rio Grande seems hardly likely to have taken $12 million in losses in the past five years, and the train seems secure at least for now.

It has long been axiomatic that if the D&RGW ever opted out of the ZEPHYR, Amtrak, which has long admired the route, would step in. In the face of the present Amtrak budget disaster that might be questionable, but a 3-times weekly SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR over the Rio Grande, with four trips on the UP, might significantly strengthen the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR west of Denver. But for now, all such thoughts are speculation.

Within the last three months, Rio Grande officials have publicly expressed their commitment to the continuance of the train, for the D&RGW still fears daily Amtrak service on its short freight-crowded line. Moves to integrate the ZEPHYR into the Amtrak services beyond Salt Lake have possibility. A single station could be used there and certainly eastbound connections ought to be restored, but the Rio Grande seems content to run a high quality train, with or without connections, and to leave schedule adjustments to Amtrak.

Whatever adjustments might be made in Ogden connections, the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR remains a train that, no matter how often it is remarked upon, needs its story constantly retold, for only if patronage holds up will the train long remain. Ride it, soon and often, and tell your friends. Reward the Rio Grande for its quality services by riding its train.



page 12 The eastbound train at Glenwood Springs, Colorado, in October, 1976. Glenn Lee photo.

DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN RAILROAD CO.

P. O. Box
Denver, C
August 23

Mr. James Russell, Editor
Rail Travel News
Message Media
P. O. Box 9007
Berkeley, CA 94709

Dear Mr. Russell:

We are very pleased and gratified to note that Th
Grande Zephyr has again placed first in your current '
Rate the Trains" survey.

In all levels of responsibility for our passenger
every effort is being made to provide dependable and s
service to our patrons.

This recognition inspires us to try even harder t
to merit the support and favorable comments of your re

Please accept our very best wishes.

Sincerely and cordially,

L. J. Bernstein
Director-Passenger and Dining

STEAM AT THE NRHS CONVENTION

Kenneth A. Maylath

In spite of some temperamental behavior on the part of ex-T&P steam engine 610, the 1977 NRHS convention in Roanoke must go down as one of the most successful yet. Over 950 persons were on hand for the festivities, with complete sellouts on the Saturday and Sunday (Sept 3&4) steam-powered trips as well as the Saturday banquet at the N&W-operated Hotel Roanoke.

The trouble with 610 began a couple of weeks before the convention on the first of three scheduled trips from Alexandria to Monroe and return. Difficulty arose on the return trip, which got in after 3am with diesel power. A similar breakdown happened on the following Saturday and cropped up again during the convention. It all started with a minor derailment of the lead truck just before the first run to Monroe. The derailment disturbed the weight distribution on the truck and drivers, causing bearings to overheat and burn out.

With repairs completed just before departure of the Thursday convention special out of Alexandria, it was decided to run slowly at first to avoid further possible problems. Another adjustment was made at Manassas during a water stop, then faster running with two E units idling behind the 610 just in case. The diesels were not needed on the Southern or the N&W between Lynchburg and Roanoke. However, delays for servicing to check the locomotive and for freights conspired to bring a midnight arrival in Roanoke. The northbound convention special from Durham with locomotive 4501 ran on time and with little trouble, but the idea of a doubleheader with the combined consist between Lynchburg and Roanoke was scratched.

Friday dawned with continued good weather, featuring a pair of half-day trips. In the morning a pair of vintage Alco RS-3 diesels pulled the first passenger train since 1951 over the 9-mile Lone Star branch north of town--the only other such train being a special when the line opened that year to serve a cement plant.

The afternoon trip consisted of a tour around the huge N&W yard complex with a stop at the Roanoke Transportation Museum.

Steam was king on Saturday, with the 610 and 4501 doubleheaded over the Blue Ridge grade to Lynchburg, with a couple of runbys included. The 610 returned to Roanoke with a few of the cars, while most of the equipment and passengers continued behind the 4501 south to Altavista on the Southern, then back to Roanoke on the former Virginian line. 4501 put on a stellar performance.

Sunday it was the 610's turn to work alone, as everyone crossed his fingers. The route was the mainline HILLTOPPER route to Bluefield, then a coal branch about 40 miles thru the mountains. Things went well enough as the 610 handled 16 cars uphill most of the way. One sidelight happened on the stiff grade between Roanoke and Christiansburg: the oil fire on 610 blew out in the smoky confines of a tunnel. Restarting could be a problem. But after letting out the slack, the 2-10-4 slowly, slowly gained momentum and topped the grade at nearly the maximum speed limit of 40mph--imposed to protect the bearings.

Diesel 1776 in Bicentennial colors handled the train for the coal branch run to provide extra servicing time for the 610 in Bluefield. The bearing problem was threatening again, so the 1776 was left on for the return to Roanoke and did most of the work.

The Monday convention special back to Alexandria was to be doubleheaded as far as Charlottesville via the N&W Shenandoah Valley line to Waynesboro, and the Chessie line to Charlottesville. It was thought wise to leave 610 in Roanoke for repairs since it was scheduled for later specials in the South. The tonnage was too much for 4501 alone, so a couple of diesels had to assist. In Charlottesville all three were removed and replaced with a pair of Southern units. A fast run to Alexandria brought the convention to a close--a most memorable convention.

Over 600 NRHS members jammed the Ballroom of the Hotel Roanoke for the banquet featuring steak and remarks on the state of the railroad industry by N&W President John Fishwick.

RECENT TRAIN WRECK PHOTOS

Amtrak P30 diesel #708 was on the front of the PANAMA LIMITED when it hit a lumber truck on Aug 25, as detailed in our last issue. Photo by Jim Selzer.

The two photos below are of the Aug 27 SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR crash scene at La Grange IL, taken by Ralph Fredericks. Upper photo shows the two Amtrak SDP40F engines on the collapsed viaduct. Firemen are hosing down the lead engine, no. 584, which is lying upside down, while engine 587 is nearly upright to the left of it. The lower photo is from the opposite side of the viaduct, and shows the tangled wreckage of the freight train involved in the sideswiping collision, with cars fallen onto the Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad tracks. More details on page 16.

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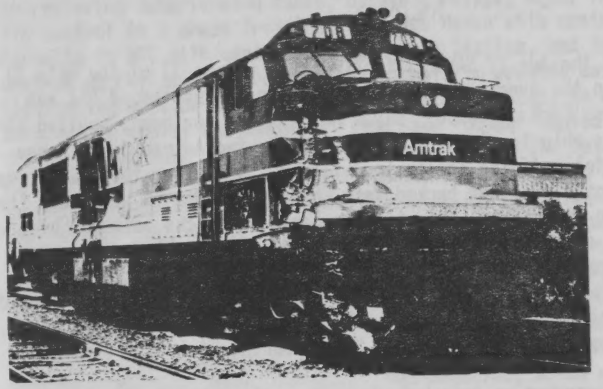

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Mixed Train of Thoughts

SOME MORE DETAILS on the Aug 27 SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR wreck: 17 of the BN's 71 freight cars derailed on the overpass, and seconds later the westbound SFZ was highballing thru Congress Park at 65mph. Clyde Hughes, the engineer, spotted the derailed freight and was able to slow the train, but the two Amtrak diesels rammed into the wreck and fell off the collapsing viaduct. At 7:30pm the SFZ, minus its two engines and baggage car, was backed into Chicago, whence it started. The train left Chicago again at 10:45pm, this time on Santa Fe tracks between Chicago and Galesburg. Service on the BN's Chicago-Aurora line was annulled, and commuters had to take trains between Chicago and Brookfield and Between La Grange and Aurora and use RTA buses between LaGrange and Brookfield. Amtrak trains used Santa Fe tracks to Galesburg, with passengers at intermediate points being bused. The BN main line was reopened Sept 1. During the detouring, Amtrak trains ran 3-5 hours late.....

* * *

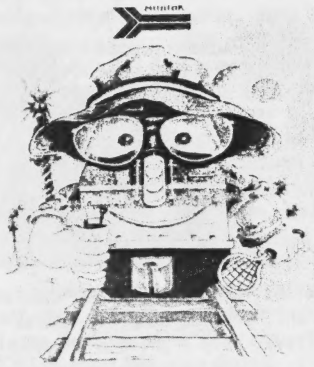
NO MORE PETS will be carried on Amtrak trains, the corporation announced Sept 16. Starting the 19th the pet policy is changed because of new U.S. Dept. of Agriculture regulations under the federal "Animal Welfare Act" which requires specific environmental requirements for both baggage cars and rail stations (previously Amtrak carried pets in special containers in baggage cars, except for seeing eye dogs, which could ride with their owners). Amtrak said the law would require it to spend $13.8 million to be in compliance. Amtrak said it carries about 200 dogs and cats per month. Previously-made reservations for pet travel to be carried out after Sept 19 will still be honored, Amtrak said, and seeing eye dogs can still travel with blind passengers..... THE COMING WINTER will be colder than normal in the East and Midwest, but not so cold as last winter, predicts a government study, and the Farmer's Almanac comes to much the same conclusion.....

PROFESSOR RONALD SHECK, who proposed the 5-year Amtrak growth plan published in the First August 1975 RTN, has studied long distance train ridership data and concluded that the belief that only 3% of passengers ride the full length of a long distance route is fallacious. For example on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED, if one considers the end points of L.A. and Chicago, it happens that 8% of the train's riders (1975 data) travel the full route. However, this is an arbitrary definition of long-distance passengers; if one expands thedefinition of end points to include the area from Galesburg to Chicago and from San Bernardino to L.A., one finds that fully 18% of all passengers ride that distance--certainly a long distance by any standards. As Prof. Sheck points out, "The EMPIRE BUILDER is cited as having only 4% of the passengers on the train for the entire trip. While this is statistically true, the implication to the reader of such statements is that the train is operated only for a handful of long distance passengers. This is not the case..." Sheck's analysis of four Southwestern trains appeared in The Clearance Card, membership newsletter of the SW RR Historical Society (Sept).....

* * *

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR ELECTRIFICATION plans approved this summer by the DOT include a $256 million electric power system between Boston and Washington. The new system will provide 25 kilovolts, 60-Hertz power for up to 120mph operation on the 456-mile line. It will use power drawn directly from commercial lines. The DOT said that all affected states and local transportation authorities are being consulted on how to make their equipment compatible with the new system. In Connecticut, commuter trains will run at a lower voltage compatible with the system in that state. Both the electrification plan and the decision to use concrete ties are part of the $1.75 billion rebuilding program ordered by the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976 (the "4-R" Act). Travel time Boston-NY is meant to be reduced to 3hrs, 40mins, and DC-NY to 2hrs, 40mins.....

THE SIGNALLING SYSTEM for the rebuilt Northeast Corridor will cost $195 million and will include: Modifying track circuits for 60-Hz compatibility; Repairing or replacing deteriorated cable, obsolete relays, etc.; Installing central traffic control in 3 areas from Boston to New Haven with central at Boston, from New Rochelle to NYC with central at NYC's Penn Station, and from Wilmington to DC with central at Philadelphia; Relocating signals to provide safe stopping distances; Eliminating wayside signals, except at interlockings, to reduce vandalism and maintenance costs; and Adding a "stop" and "80mph" indication to the cab signal system to increase safety and reduce trip times. The total cost is made up of $101 million for signals, $67 million for train control, and $27 million for communications..... THE NEW YORKER'S E. M. Frimbo talks about the last run of the Railway Post Office car as the lead item in that magazin's "Talk of the Town" department (Sept 19 issue).....



THE SMILING FLORIDA train shown here is the work of artist Rick Meyerowitz, whom the New York Times Magazine (Jul 31) describes as "one of the top commercial artists in the country." He is mentioned in an article about Mad magazine, which was a childhood favorite of his..... MANY FLORIDA RAIL passengers aren't smiling these days, however, with the threatened cutoff of the FLORIDIAN and the CHAMPION being discontinued. Says Robert Clark: "From the consists of the SILVER STAR in mid-September, it appears that Amtrak forfeited the passengers who used to use the CHAMPION at this time of year. After the CHAMPION was dropped, the SILVER STAR briefly stayed at 18 cars, then slumped back to a 14-17 car train, only a couple of cars longer than in previous years. All the non-revenue cars are going to Miami, leaving Tampa/St. Pete with just half of the revenue cars, a 5-car train when the entire consist is 14 cars. This probably reflects the true requirement for Tampa/St. Pete, while previous trains ran largely empty beyond Orlando during summer and fall months. Unfortunately, the change to a single operation practically cancelled Jacksonville and Savannah as useful stops from the Raleigh/Columbia route, being early hours. A more successful operation would have been a SILVER STAR on a 3- or 4-hour-later schedule southbound, keeping the present schedule northbound. Major cities would have had better arrival times, and a southbound connection from Boston would be possible. It's now overnight and wait six hours in Washington from Boston".....

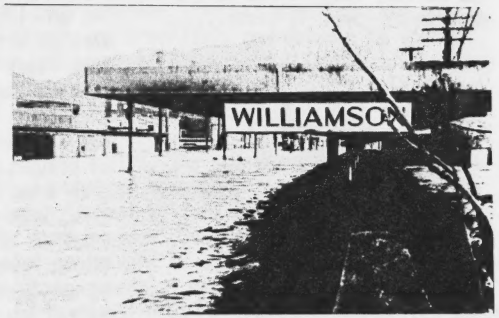
* * *

AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION is announcing "elegant dining service" for the fall. The announcement indicates a return from summer picnic-style meals to "fall luxury service." Says Auto-Train, "passengers will dine in a candlelight setting with fresh flowers on every table. The emphasis hasbeen placed on making the evening meal luxurious, from the linen napkins to the English glass and sculptured china. Dinner will include a fresh salad, tossed immediately before your meal, a choice of delicious entrees such as Pompano Fish, Half Baked Chicken with Dressing and Braised Slices of Beef Jardiniere, plus a selection of desserts few can resist." Sounds great, altho we prefer our chicken well-done.....

THE LOUISVILLE AUTO-TRAIN has been suspended indefinitely, rather than run weekly. The announcement came the day before the last combined run on Sept 3 (see also "Cars & Consists"). With the A-T and FLORIDIAN no longer combined, the Amtrak train is powered by F40 diesels..... THE NATIONAL LIMITED westbound on Sep 13 was disrupted by flood waters near Kansas City, and passengers were bused Independence to Kansas City. MoPac tracks were washed out from the Little Blue River near Independence, and the equipment was deadheaded to K.C., arriving at 5:34pm on the 13th.....

THE SOUTHWEST LIMITED westbound hit a pickup truck at Ethel MO, near Marceline MO, and arrived at Kansas City on Sep 14 at 3:40am instead of the scheduled 1:55, leaving at 4:07. There was underframe damage to the steam lines, steps and ladders on the diesel units. The train was deadheading dome lounge 9383, an ex-Milwaukee car, just behind engines 514 and 517. While the SWL no longer regularly carries its first class dome lounge and diner, these occasionally are put on when heavy traffic, such as a tour movement, warrants, according to Amtrak. The train that left Chicago Sep 14 was using car 9201 "Starlight Dome" as the tail car. The train that left Chicago Sep 8 deadheaded two new bi-level cars, 34007 & 34006, on its rear to LaJunta.....

HOW MANY FLOODED Amtrak stations are glorified on a post card? asks Garland Harper of the Williamson WV Amtrak station. His station is pictured on this color card published by Bob Craycraft, Box 1478, Williamson WV 25661, in the condition it was the morning of Apr 5, 1977. SaysMr. Harper, "Johnstown, Pennsylvania--I know how you feel!".....



THE OGDEN, UTAH Union Station is undergoing extensive refurbishing. When completed, it is expected to house a 24-hour restaurant, provide complete Amtrak service, hold bus service for Greyhound and Trailways, have a private travel agency, and contain offices for UP and SP. Work is funded by contributions from all the eventual tenants plus participation by the city in Amtrak's matching-fund station rehabilitation program..... THE PIONEER'S BUSINESS continues phenomenally heavy into September, with loads often up to capacity on the little 4-car Amfleet run. Salt Lake City boardings are sometimes as many as 60 persons. Pocatello provides tremendous business despite "witching-hour" times, and Boise often fills a westbound train. Almost stunned by the heavy PIONEER ridership so soon after its June 7 startup, Amfleet planners are reportedly now thinking in terms of bi-level cars for the Seattle-Salt Lake train, and there is talk of a thru Portland-Chicago sleeper and coach via Ogden and the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR once sufficient bi-level cars are in operation.....

* * *

THE EMPIRE BUILDER leaving Seattle Sept 13 carried two ex-NP dome sleepers on the rear deadhead for Chicago reportedly for assignment on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED...

RHODE ISLAND DOT has been recently polling riders on what facilities and services they would like to have in the recently-rehabilitated Providence station.....

A RAILROAD MYSTERY cropped up on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED. An unidentified man apparently fell from the train and was found near death by the tracks near Burns Harbor, Indiana on Sept 18, spotted by a Conrail freight crew. The westbound LSL was slowed by police order so they could reach Chicago Union Station first to question passengers. The LSL crew and 107 passengers were questioned, and the westbound connecting SF ZEPHYR was delayed while officers questioned 16 persons changing to that train from the LSL. The man died later in a hospital.....

A CONRAIL FREIGHT train was apparently set loose Sept 19 in Scranton PA and rolled downhill for almost 20 miles, to Edwardsville, where it derailed. The 25-car, 2-engine train with engines shut down evidently had its brakes released by vandals. There were no injuries in the 35-minute run when began about 10:20pm.....

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, the first new cabinet-level department in 11 years--since the Department of Transportation?--officially begins work on Oct 1.....

CHICAGO-SEATTLE TRAINS got their new Sept 8 schedules, pretty much as outlined last issue, except that the separate TWIN CITIES HIAWATHA between Chicago and Minneapolis has not yet begun, and thus there is no long layover in Minneapolis to change trains. It is now unofficially reported that that train will begin operating Oct 3, and will be an Amfleet train consisting of one F40 engine, two 60-seat Amcoaches, an Amdinette and a standard baggage car. The baggage will operate between Chicago and Fargo ND, being switched to and from the connecting train (either the EMPIRE BUILDER or the NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, whichever one is running on a given day. The NORTH COAST is now numbered 17 & 18, while the BUILDER remains 7 & 8. The daily TWIN CITIES HIAWATHA will be numbered 9 & 10, the NCH's former numbers. The BUILDER leaves Seattle on Sun, Tues, Thur, & Sat, and leaves Chicago Sun, Tues, Thur, & Fri, while the NORTH COAST leaves Seattle Mon, Wed & Fri and leaves Chicago Mon, Wed, & Sat. A new timetable, form 10B, in a printing of 55,000 is out, covering these trains. A more drastic schedule change, as outlined last issue, is expected Oct 30, when Daylight Saving Time begins.....

* * *

THE DEL MONTE revival moves along, with the funding bill for that train and the SUNTAN SPECIAL passing the California state legislature this month, and awaiting the governor's signature. Some Monterey elements are still opposed to the train, and the Monterey Peninsula Herald editorialized against it again on Sept 12. CalTrans says it is "mildly" encouraging the train's startup.....

THE FLIPPED SCHEDULES proposed for the Chicago-Seattle trains, to take effect Oct 30, have been verified again by another document leaked to RTN, and the schedules are very close to those printed here last issue (p.15). In addition, we can report that Amtrak is considering rescheduling the northbound PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL to leave Seattle at 7:30pm and arrive Vancouver BC at 12:15am. Preliminary schedules also show two more Seattle-Portland trains: a train 795 would leave Seattle daily just 15mins ahead of the PIONEER, and would leave Portland daily (#798) just 15mins after the PIONEER. The ARROWHEAD out of Minneapolis would be scheduled 5 minutes later than it now is..... A KENTUCKY ASSOCIATION of RR Passengers is now being formed. Info from Box 17091, Louisville KY 40217..... PAUL H. REISTRUP will be the guest speaker at the Massachusetts Bay RR Enthusiasts' annual dinner on Oct 19 at Summerside Lodge (former B&M station), Malden MA. Info from Box 136, Ward Hill MA 01830..... THE MONTREALER MARKS its fifth anniversary on Sept 29.....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER was involved in a car-train accident in Mabton WA the morning of Aug 15. The auto driver was killed..... WHERE ARE RIDERSHIP figures? ask some readers. The answer is that Amtrak is way behind in getting them out. We published the Mar and April figures in the First July issue--we publish two months at a time for economy--, and the May figures are the latest released by Amtrak (except for brief overall summaries)..... THE SAN DIEGANS showed an increase in ridership of 57% in August--78,448 passengers versus 49,896 in Aug 1976. Amtrak has announced a one-day package tour using the SAN DIEGANS: a "Gambler's Special" from L.A. to therace track at Agua Caliente, Mexico, on Sats & Suns, using a Mexicoach bus connection from San Diego to Tijuana. 48-hr advance reservations are needed...

THE CARTIER RAILWAY in Canada is said to carry passengers only when pressed hard to do so..... IN AN INTERVIEW will Seattle radio station KOMO, Senator Warren G. Magnuson said hefelt the quad-weekly EMPIRE BUILDER was necessary in view of the equipment shortage, but hinted that daily operation of the EB and NCH may may be coming. He said the EB cutback was temporary..... FIRST NORTH COAST HIAWATHA from Seattle on the new tri-weekly schedule went east at 10:45am on Sept 9. It carried an EMPIRE BUILDER consist including an ex-GN Great Dome.....

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC reportedly will increase speed limits for Amtrak trains in some locations effective next Jan 1..... THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN and the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway are ready to begin merger negotiations.....

page 19

THE STARTUP OF the SACRAMENTAN, the Oakland-Sacramento CA train to be funded by CalTrans, is off indefinitely. The reason is that CalTrans has decided that the short distance run would be a uneconomical use of equipment, so it has proposed to Amtrak that the train be lengthened into a long distance run, Sacramento to San Diego. This would be an overnight run between Northern and Southern California (the long-awaited restoration of the LARK!), and word is that neither Amtrak nor SP would object to this, the biggest problem being finding equipment for the run. Presumably the greatest likelihood is that it would be an Amfleet long distance train like the PIONEER. The Richmond Amtrak-BART station will open on Oct 30, however, with formal ceremonies Nov 1. All Amtrak trains out of Oakland will use it. However, Suisun-Fairfield won't be used until the "Am-LARK" gets going. CalTrans's second choice is 3 trains daily Oak-Sacto, which SP doesn't want, and which it vows to tie up in arbitration hearings.....

Mailing date of this issue: September 23, 1977.

RTN's long-delayed First Rail Travel Yearbook will be published soon. Watch these pages for the announcement. Thank you!

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Amtrak receives direct rail subsidies totaling almost $500 million annually. Airlines receive $73 million in direct subsidies and are also subsidized by municipal financing and construction of airports. In contrast, the bus industry now finances and builds its own terminals and pays more than $100 million annually in taxes, much of it flowing to the Highway Trust Fund for road building... We've got to have some federal help or we'll be in trouble like the railroads."

--Continental Trailways Board Chairman Fred G. Currey, in Los Angeles Times interview, Aug 15.

"For too long, we've allowed the Highway Lobby in its greed to tell us pompously that Americans won't give up their cars to ride in buses. Of course they won't; no one ever thought they would. The American bus is an abomination. No one rides it any distance who can avoid it."

--Mike Layton in Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Aug 12.

Rate the Trains

ANNOUNCING RTN'S SIXTH READER RATING SURVEY

Readers are invited to submit their ratings and comments on North American regularly scheduled passenger trains (not commuter) ridden between Jul 1 & Dec 31, 1977. On the opposite page is a form for submitting ratings. You need not use the form--just write on a postcard or sheet of paper using your own format if you wish.

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate as many trains as you wish, but only those you have personally ridden this year. Rate each train on each of the 11 categories (A-K) below:
(A) Your impression of overall quality of service, taking all into account; (B) On-board personnel's service (except food-lounge personnel); (C) Food & lounge crew's service; (D) Food quality; (E) Car condition (cleanliness, repair, etc.); (F) Desirability of route it follows; (G) Station services; (H) Track condition; (I) Desirability of train's schedule; (J) Train promotion; (K) Type of cars used.
For your ratings, use the 9-point scale shown below. Please keep ratings separate from any other correspondence (on separate sheet, not separate envelope).

1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9

Extremely poor — Average, acceptable — Extremely good

SEND YOUR RATINGS TO: Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Thank you!

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

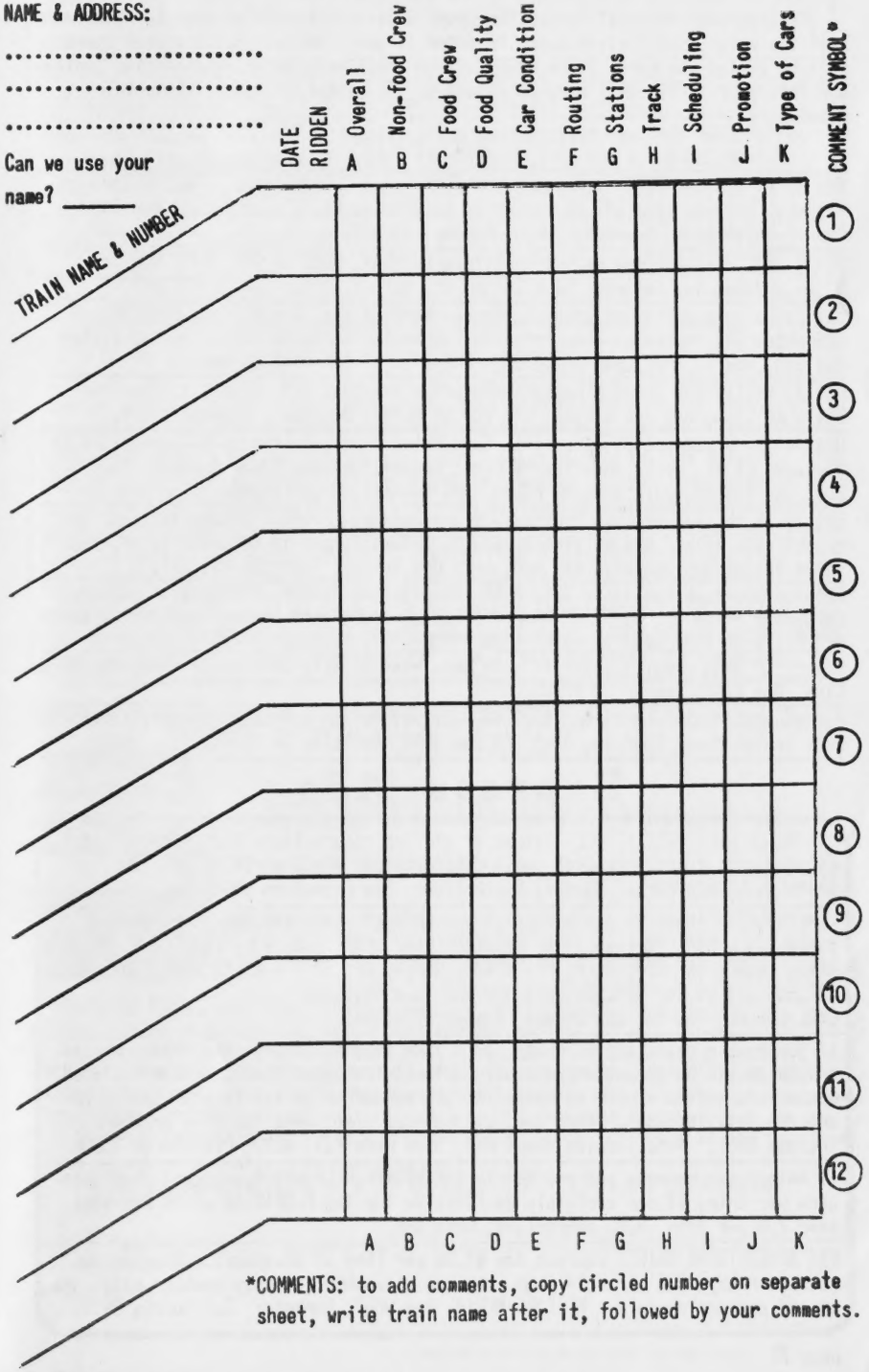
NAME & ADDRESS:

.....

.....

.....

Can we use your name? _____



*COMMENTS: to add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Starting with the next issue, the cover date of RTN will be changed to coincide with its actual publication date, in order to avoid confusion. The next issue will be called the First Issue of October. There will be no issues dated September this year. This will have no effect on the number of issues subscribers receive.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 1: CN steamer 6060 to Gravenhurst Centennial Celebrations. Fall colors in Muskoka. $24.50, kids $17.75, sidetrip to Washago $5. Upper Canada Rwy Society, Box 42, Station D, Scarboro, Ont., Canada M1R 4Y7.

Oct 2: RDC fall foliage excursion Ottawa-Waltham, Que. on CPR. $15, box lunch $2.25. Bytown Rwy Society, 93 O'Connor St, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1P 5M8.

Oct 2: Foliage Unlimited special, Boston-North Adams, 8am-4:30pm. Food aboard. $29, kids $19; optional side trips to Bennington & Alpine Slide. Mystic Valley Rwy Soc, Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126. Phone (617) 361-4445 24 hours.

Oct 1: Ex-T&P 610 steam Birmingham-Meridian 7am-9pm. $21, kids $19. Heart of Dixie RR Club, c/o Jim Gibson, 417 20th St North, Bessemer, Alabama 35020.

Oct 14-16: Steamer 2101 returns to Sand Patch Grade; Baltimore-DC-Cumberland to Rockwood PA RT. Incl. shop tour & night photos. Chessie Steam Special, Dept CJ, 2 N. Charles St, Baltimore MD 21201. RDC connect. from Pittsburgh on Oct 15.

Oct 15-16 CN steamer 6060 Montreal-Ottawa-Napanee-Toronto, autumn foliage. Optional side trips. $79.90 single, $39.90 15th-only; pay to CN, send to St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Society, Box 400, Cote des Neiges, Montreal H3S 2S7.

Oct 15: Bus tour San Jose, Oak. & SF Atk stations to Napa Valley wine country; Calistoga Steam RR, Sterling Winery & aerial cable car, Sonoma, Gaslight & Western RR. $23. NRHS Central Coast Chap., Box 8407, San Jose CA 95155.

Oct 1: UP 8444 steam special is sold out. Nov 26 trip available: Rocky Mt. RR Club, Box 2391, Denver CO 80201.

One special fantrips listing is free, subject to our editing. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Express Ads

ONE QUICK CALL DOES IT ALL--Amtrak or airline reservations and tickets, hotels, car rentals, tours, cruises! Call GREAT WESTERN TOURS at (415) 398-2994, or write us at 639 Market Street, Ninth Floor, San Francisco 94105.

TIMETABLES - "What it was before it was AMTRAK". Last pre-Amtrak Public Timetables of - D&H; PC East West; C&O/B&O; N&W; RF&P; SOU; SCL; L&N; GTW; IC; GM&O; CRI&P; BN; CNW; MILW; MP; AT&SF; D&RGW; UP; SP - - $1.50 each; 10 for $12.50; all 20 for $21.00. Add 10¢ per item postage.
CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland Street, Hamden CT 06518.

If you have a priceless RR photo you'd like to see hanging in a frame, we can create an Old World masterpiece oil portrait from your photo. Frame included, photo returned unharmed, satisfaction guaranteed or we fix to your specs. $60 and up, 9x12 to 30x40. Other subjects painted also. Send for free brochure, include SASE. Ness Studios, Dept RTN, 5907 Penn Mall #210, Pittsburgh 15206.

If Amtrak can reroute and reschedule the MOUNTAINEER which averaged 35 passengers per trip, it can certainly do likewise for the FLORIDIAN which averages over 200 per trip. W.H. Snorteland, Ohio ARP.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads (camera-ready) $25 per half-page (maximum size--4x5 inches); smaller sizes are priced proportionately. MESSAGE MEDIA, Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, Pullman, stationery, rules, metal items from 25 railroads. Long stamped envelope for list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. (Will buy large and small railroad collections.)

Employee Timetables, Pullman Diagrams, Railroadiana. Send SSAE.
20th Century Hobbies Ltd., 1034 College Ave., Wheaton IL 60187.

Bound for Niagara Falls & 6060 STEAM? Ride then shop at The IRON HORSE Gifts & Souvenirs in the restored CN Depot. Mention this ad for a 10% DISCOUNT.

GOING EURAIL? Take a worldwide THOMAS COOK INTERNATIONAL TIMETABLE, $7.50 bulk mail ($9.50 air) from Thomas Cook Ltd, P.O. Box 36, Peterborough, England.

YOU'RE INVITED--MEXICO RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--JAN 20 to Feb 5, 1978--Trip of Thousand Wonders, Mexico City, Merida (narrow gauge), Cancun, Uxmal, Metro, street cars, locomotive ride. Trip starts in Oklahoma (join anywhere). MIDWEST TRAVEL SERVICE, 2936R Bella Vista, Midwest City, OK 73110--Phone 405-732-0566.

Don't be in the dark, subscribe to the LARK. A monthly newsletter about what to do and where to find it, a must for all railfans. Be in the know. Get free copy by mentioning RTN & enclosing stamp. Mail subscriptions to Ron Hook, 869 Rosemount Rd, Oakland CA 94610. Subscriptions $3.00 for 12 issues first class.

WEST COAST RAIL SALE, now through April 30th, except during Holiday periods. $129.00 round trip coach between San Diego/Los Angeles and Portland/Seattle/Vancouver. $89.00 between San Francisco and Seattle, $77.00 between San Francisco and Portland. Other money-saving 30-day excursion fares to the East, as well as the winter USA Rail passes. Ask the rail specialists. LET'S TRAVEL TOURS, 3780 Elizabeth St, Riverside CA 92516. 714-787-8350.

I will be in Denver area on 10-1-77. I'd like to share ride with a local railfan who plans on pacing UP 8444 that day Denver-Laramie. Will share gas & other expenses. Dave Arthur 4581 Vallecito Ln, Yorba Linda CA 92686. (714)528-6457.

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